



Frank Burns

State Representative

72nd Legislative District

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Police & Fire Update

Burns: 'I'll never vote to defund the Police'



Rep. Burns is proud to stand with members of Cambria County's law enforcement community.

Members of law enforcement and the law-abiding people they protect have no better friend in Harrisburg than Rep. Burns, who founded and serves as chairman of the legislature's Blue Lives Matter Caucus.

Rep. Burns doesn't want to live in a world where criminals rule the roost any more than you do. A strong law-and-order voice in the Capitol, he's worked to make assaulting a law enforcement officer a hate crime – with stiffer

penalties for those who decide to do such things as slug a policeman or tussle with a prison guard.

Those who flee law enforcement, or whose attempt to elude injures or kills an officer, would also face greater jail time if Rep. Burns can get his way.

Cutting police department budgets, as some are proposing, is a non-starter for Rep. Burns, who promises, "I'll defend, but never defund, the police."

\$3.8 million in funding for fire, ambulance companies since Rep. Burns took office

When disaster strikes, Rep. Burns knows the importance of having a reliable, well-equipped, and properly trained team of first responders, so he's proud to have secured \$3.8 million in grants and loans to our fire companies and ambulance services as your state representative.

Much of that assistance comes in the form of grants awarded through the Office of State Fire Commissioner Bruce Trego, where Rep. Burns has used his experience to cultivate strong connections.



Rep. Burns has developed a solid working relationship with state Fire Commissioner Bruce Trego.

\$253,000 awarded so far this year.

Cambria Township Volunteer Fire Co.	\$12,878
Carrolltown Fire Co.	\$11,783
Community Volunteer Fire Co. of Lilly	\$13,289
Cresson Volunteer Fire Co.	\$14,248
Cresson Area Ambulance Service	\$9,192
Dauntless Fire Co.	\$14,248
Ebensburg Area Ambulance Association	\$9,192
Forest Hills Area Ambulance Association	\$9,192
Gallitzin Fire Co.	\$13,700
Jackson Township Volunteer Fire Co.	\$14,284
Jackson Township Volunteer Fire Co. (EMS)	\$9,192
John Carroll Area Ambulance Service	\$9,192
Loretto Fire Co.	\$12,057
Middle Taylor Township Volunteer Fire Co.	\$14,248
Patton Fire Co. No. 1	\$14,248
Portage EMS	\$9,192
Portage Volunteer Fire Co.	\$25,611
Reade Township Volunteer Fire Co.	\$11,920
Revloc Volunteer Fire Co.	\$12,604
Summerhill Township Volunteer Fire Co.	\$12,741

Burns increases penalties for assaulting prison guards

Yet again demonstrating that he'll support good ideas from either party, Rep. Burns voted for a Republican-authored bill that makes any assault on a corrections officer that's likely to cause bodily injury a felony – instead of the attack having to cause “serious” bodily injury.

Rep. Burns, who attended the funeral of Sgt. Mark Baserman – the SCI-Somerset corrections officer who died after being beaten and kicked in the head by a boots-wearing inmate serving a life sentence – believes in toughening penalties for such attacks whenever possible.

If you're looking for someone who believes in law and order, look no further than Rep. Burns. He's rejoicing that this bill was sent to the governor's desk for signing into law.



Burns proposes scholarship program for volunteers

Fire company, ambulance service, rescue squad members would qualify

Rep. Burns knows how heavily small communities rely on volunteers to provide fire, ambulance and rescue squad services – and how hard it's become to find people able and willing to devote time to those unpaid jobs.

As a reward and inducement for volunteering, Rep. Burns is leading the effort to have the Pennsylvania Higher Education Assistance Agency award scholarships to eligible, active members of those groups.

They'd have to meet certain requirements – such as being a volunteer for at least six months and maintaining that status, and having a high school diploma or GED – but Rep. Burns thinks this is the perfect win-win solution.



Rep. Burns got a great reception when he introduced his scholarships for emergency services volunteers legislation at the Cambria County Fire School.

“Offering scholarships through PHEAA is a novel and effective way to keep these vital community services staffed.” – Rep. Burns

Burns calls for parole review after ex-cons charged with murder

Victims include police officer shot three times in back

Siding with the Pennsylvania State Corrections Officers Association, Rep. Burns called for an external review of state parole policies and procedures after several recent parolees were charged with murder – of a woman who was strangled in her home, an 8-year-old boy who was repeatedly stabbed and a police officer who was shot three times in the back.

Rep. Burns called on Gov. Tom Wolf and Corrections Secretary John Wetzel to immediately halt parole hearings until an independent source – not the department Wetzel heads – can review the process.

While other legislators may elect to lay low, refusing to speak up against the powers-that-be in Harrisburg, Rep. Burns continues asking pointed questions and taking tough stands.

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Aug. 2, 2019

The Honorable John Wetzel, Secretary
Pennsylvania Department of Corrections
1920 Technology Parkway
Mechanicsburg, PA 17050

RE: External Review of Parole Needed

Dear Secretary Wetzel:

The recent spate of murders by Pennsylvania offenders released on parole is unfathomable. An 8-year-old boy was repeatedly stabbed while other children watched, stunned. A woman was strangled in her home, then set on fire to cover the evidence. An off-duty Pittsburgh police officer was shot three times in the back.

Five recent Pennsylvania prison parolees have been charged with killing six people in just two months. Our process of determining who to release on parole is critically flawed and must immediately change. I stand with the Pennsylvania State Corrections Officers Association in demanding an outside review of our state's parole policies and procedures. An internal audit is simply not enough.

We cannot sit idly by, watching murder after murder, in the name of soft-on-crime "reforms" that loosen our parole policies. The people of Pennsylvania put their trust, their safety and their lives in the hands of public officials like you who ultimately decide if a convicted criminal should be freed from prison.

You've indicated in news articles that you are happy to provide access to the necessary Department of Corrections records and data for any independent reviewer. I trust you will stand by that promise and support an external examination of our parole system. We should be more focused on protecting innocent Pennsylvanians from senseless death at the hands of convicted criminals than about reducing our prison population at all costs.

Please put any new parole hearings on hold until an independent, outside review can figure out why so many unrehabilitated murderers are slipping through your bars and back into society.



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Burns: \$96,000 grant supports Cambria law enforcement

Always striving to make sure those who protect us have enough tools and resources to do the job, Rep. Burns

announced Cambria County’s receipt of nearly \$100,000 in federal funding to assist police and other agencies during the COVID-19 crisis.

One of Rep. Burns’ mantras is that Cambria County must never be shortchanged or left behind when it comes to state or federal funding, so he was pleased to see this streak of getting our fair share remain intact.

“As the founder of the Blue Lives Matter Caucus in Harrisburg, I’m always looking for ways that we can support our local law enforcement officers and help them do their jobs as safely as possible.” – Rep. Burns

You can learn more about Rep. Burns’ legislative successes and thoughts on state and community issues by following him on Facebook at

/RepFrankBurns

and on Twitter

@RepFrankBurns

Burns ensures fire, EMS companies qualify for \$31m in COVID-19 emergency funding

When he discovered that some volunteer fire departments would not be eligible for an emergency COVID-19 grant program, Rep. Burns not only introduced an amendment to fix the problem – he reached across the aisle to gain passage in the Republican-controlled House.

The concept Rep. Burns put forth was embraced by the state Senate, and fire companies that weren’t already in line to automatically receive a share of \$31 million in emergency grants are now allowed to apply for them.

Rep. Burns knows that legislation sometimes takes a circuitous route, but what matters most is fighting for the hard-working volunteer fire and EMS companies whose fundraising was hamstrung by COVID-19.

Rep. Burns is constantly in touch with these important community volunteers, so he’s aware of their needs year-round – and whenever an unforeseen crisis hits, he’s ready to lead the charge in Harrisburg on their behalf.